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May 19, 2003

United State Coast Guard  
915 Second Avenue  
Seattle WA 98174-1067

43 LG -01-104451 -13

Changes to Drawbridge Operating Regulations

ATTN: Mr. Austin Pratt:

I am writing in regard to the US Coast Guard proposal to amend 33 CFR Part 117, "Drawbridge Operating Regulations", as published in the Federal Register of April 17, 2003. As I understand the proposal, part 117.35 will be revised to require that the bridge owner submit a written request for changes in the drawbridge operating schedule for scheduled maintenance (including construction projects to replace aging equipment or perform structural modifications and repairs) no later than 90 days before the start of the scheduled maintenance. Currently, the written request must be submitted no later than 30 days before the start of the scheduled maintenance. The District Commander's response time will remain at 5 days from receipt of the request. No explanation is given as to why the extended time is necessary for submittal of the written request even though the USCG response time remains the same.

I wish to object to this change because it could force unnecessary delays and costs to projects or portions of projects on movable span bridges. During the development of a project, it is understood that there will be some delays in construction and our current contract provisions warn the contractors that we must request permission from the Coast Guard 30 days in advance of all work in or near the navigable waters. There are also other time constraints on any highway bridge construction project in or near waterways such as; weather, allowable work windows that minimize impacts to fish and wildlife, and scheduling traffic closures at times to minimize impacts to traffic. We do not usually submit the request until after the contractor's schedule is known, and that does not occur until after the contract is awarded and executed. Extending the submittal period from 30 days to 90 days could add 60 days of administration costs and force the contractor to request a suspension of work.

Sincerely,

**JOHN L. HART, P.E.**  
Project Engineer

JLH/SB/jrm

MAY 27 2003

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